BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL
SANDFORD FLEMING LIBRARY

Pulpit Preaching

VOL. XI, No. 6 JUNE, 1958

EDITOR'S CHOICE

How God Makes a Man 3
Arthur Merrihew Adams

Love Your Enemies 6
Roy Pearson

The Drudgery of Heroism 11
Clarence J. Forsberg

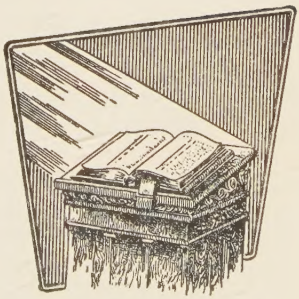
You and Your Trouble 17
Charles F. Jacobs

EVANGELISTIC MESSAGES

On Making Christ Real to Yourself 21
Paul Stromberg Rees

How I Would Explain Christianity to Someone Who Never Heard of Christ 25
Robert Cleveland Holland

When Christians Are Atheists 28
Rolland W. Schloerb



EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This month's themes are "Editor's Choice," several sermons on several emphases, and "Evangelistic Messages." Next month's themes will be "Old Testament Personalities" and "On Growing Old." The August themes are "Thoughts for Summer" and "Gospel Characters."

The sermon, "Love Your Enemies," is from **The Hard Commands of Jesus** by Roy Pearson, dean of the Andover Newton Theological School, and is reprinted here by his publisher, Abingdon Press.

Dr. Rolland W. Schloerb, for thirty years pastor of the Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, and long-time friend and contributor to PULPIT PREACHING, died on March 15, one day after he sustained a heart attack. His sermon, included in this issue, is similar to the many moving and devotional messages which have been included in this journal.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

My colleague, Charles L. Wallis, has edited a book which I believe will be of tremendous value to all pastors. Titled as **The Table of the Lord**, this volume is a source book containing all kinds of useful and quotable materials for Communion worship. In addition to various worship helps, there is a large group of pertinent poems and, what seems to me most valuable, an extensive section devoted to homiletic ideas that embrace the history, meanings and spiritual values of the Lord's Supper. (Harper

(Please turn to page 15)

WORTH QUOTING

Edited by E. Paul Hovey
The Federated Churches
Lewiston, Idaho

Faith is not only the acceptance of a fact; it is an holy expectancy in the face of a Factor.

W. M. Boyce

* * * *

The thing you want to do is the measure of your weakness. The thing you do is the measure of your strength.

* * * *

When God measures men, he puts the tape around the heart, not the head.

* * * *

The simple truth of the matter is that, although the United States mechanized the world or certainly led the way, the United States has been notoriously weak in doing the ground work. We have lived off the research of others. I am not necessarily criticizing this; I am merely stating it as a demonstrable fact. The air was conquered, despite the "first" of the Wright Brothers, by European scientists and engineers; the air was filled by American airplanes. While we may be justifiably proud of our great production, we must be realistic enough to know what our own contributions have been.

My own intimate concern with military type aircraft during World War II convinced me that both the British and the Germans could make better airplanes but that we could make more good airplanes than both

(Please turn to page 30)

Pulpit Preaching

CHARLES L. WALLIS . . . . EDITOR
Pastor, Keuka College Church, Keuka Park, N. Y.

CHARLES L. ALLEN . . . . EDITOR
Pastor, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Address sermon manuscripts and editorial correspondence to Rev. C. Wallis, Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York. Receipt will be acknowledged.

Address subscription orders to PULPIT PREACHING, Post Office Box 2088, Jackson, Mississippi. In Great Britain, address subscriptions to Religious Book Shop, 79 Reginald St., Luton, Bedfordshire, England.

Published and printed monthly at Jackson, Miss., by the Tombigbee Publishing Co. Subscription Price: U. S. and Canada, $4.00 per year; other countries $4.50 per year: single copies $.50. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Jackson, Mississippi under the Act of March 3, 18

ARTHUR MERRIHEW ADAMS

ROY PEARSON

CLARENCE J. FORSBERG

CHARLES F. JACOBS

Editor's Choice

HOW GOD MAKES A MAN

Arthur Merrihew Adams, Central Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York

This is the story of the creation f a man, one of the few really great en the world has ever known. It be- ins in an Egyptian slave hut with baby cry hushed by fearful parents s the soldiers march outside. It ends heaven with a great multitude hich no man can number joining in e song of Moses and the Lamb, ith the name of a mortal linked to e name of the eternal Son of God.

The narartive has interest because r age needs above everything else ll men like Moses, steadfast men hose eyes have looked into the art of God, granite men of integrity d power. And amid the confusions disordered days all of us need to el upon us the hand of God, and alize that His purposes for us may beyond the limit of our vision.

I

See then the creative will at work the life of Moses, first of all rough his family. His people were no way distinguished. They had en slaves for generations and be- ged to a race despised and hated en then. Like the progenitors of hn Adams and Abraham Lincoln, ey were not brilliant people. Nor s there beauty in the one-room vel where they sat on the dirt floor. t they had a family tradition of th and a personal interest in their ildren.

How often a worried parent comes a pastor or teacher and says, "I nnot understand John. He has had ery advantage, but . . ." We must ss the rest of the conversation be- use we fall to musing upon those vantages. Do the brilliance and achievement and popularity of father or mother make up for an atmosphere devoid of the realities of faith? Will beautiful furniture and nice clothes atone for a failure of personal interest? Has John enjoyed every advantage? Have parents taught him to pray and read the Bible in a meaningful way? Have they led him into a vital experience of God? Have these people who would willingly die for the boy in one heroic moment been willing to give him of their lives a few minutes at a time?

Years ago heartbroken parents started home to their native city with their only son. A famous New York psychiatrist had pronounced sentence: the ten-year old boy appeared to be definitely subnormal. The criminal tendencies which had led him again and again into the hands of the police might respond to a long course of treatment in an institution where the monthly fees were twice the amount of the family income. What could they do? The specialist had offered one forlorn hope. Asked what he would do in the same situation, he replied that he would cancel all outside engagements, reduce the hours of his practice, and devote himself entirely to the boy for a period of two years. If at the end of that time there was no improvement, the youth would be committed to a state institution.

The parents adopted his suggestion. Business hours were changed and household schedules rearranged. The youth was in the company of one of his parents every waking mom-

ent except for school hours. They took him to Church instead of sending him. They really worked at the development of his religious and moral life. At the end of a year the family travelled down to New York. The boy was examined for several hours, then the physician sent for his father and mother. "Here," he said, "is a modern miracle," and he laid before them the results of the two examinations. "If I had not made both of the studies myself, I would be sure we were now dealing with a different child."

Today that lad, still in early life, is a top-flight engineer. I think of him often when parents complain of John or Mary and the road that leads to ruin. When God makes a man He uses fathers and mothers.

The second element in Moses' development was a good education. Under impossible handicaps his mother contrived, as many another since, to secure for him the best training available in his time. Snatched from certain death by a princess of Egypt, he was educated as a son of the royal house.

Life is filled with "strange chances" like that which opened these doors of opportunity. Abraham Lincoln, keeping store, finds a set of Blackstone's legal commentaries at the bottom of a barrel of odds and ends he has bought for fifty cents and is started on the road to glory.

The strange chances come but they must be seized. You and I have better opportunities than Moses ever knew. The Bible is an open book for us, a rich and varied literature invites our attention. Yet many pass these by to spend hours with the newspapers, and lament the superior opportunities of others.

God has many ways of placing tools in our hands, of broadening our horizons, and enriching our experience through those who have preceded us in the way, but we must be alert to receive the education.

Moses rose to meet his opportunities, and at last the preliminary years were ended. He came forth with noble aspirations. He prepared to sacrifice his high position and give himself for his people.

II

Then in one fell stroke his dreams were shattered and his life fell to pieces. In pursuit of his idealism he made one mistake and the very people he sought to help turned against him. He lost faith in himself and in his world and was forced to flee into the wilderness and become a plain shepherd. The careful nurture of infancy, the long course of education, had come to this.

How many there are today live with Moses in the land of shattered dreams, parents and young men, and young wives and maidens. It would not be so bad if the hopes had been less pure and fine, the days of preparation less arduous, but this is bitter.

It may help to reflect that God seems to reserve his most important tasks for broken men. Like the golden jewels which flashed His glory in the ancient Tabernacle they must first be smashed and melted in the crucible. I have a minister friend who grows six foot tomato plants, and boasts that the average weight of each fruit is more than a pound. He grows the vines indoors in the spring and when they have reached eighteen inches, thrusts a hole into the ground and buries them deep, with only two or three leaves showing for all their months of toil. Rough treatment! But it produces unusual vines. One thinks of Peter after all the experience of Christ's earthy ministry, broken in his weak denials, before he was ready to carry the torch of faith, of John Wesley his missionary ardour damped, returning from Georgia with the shattered pieces of his life ready to be fused at Aldersgate. Professor Harper of Princeton University once made the acute observation that the life of Victor Hugo was a sermon on the text, "Sweet are the uses of ad-

ersity," for no real music came from is great heart until the harrow had assed over it. It is no accident that he greatest Americans, Washington nd Lincoln, were men of sorrows nd acquainted with grief. "Hard eather alone," says Meredith, "giv- s an edge to the mind and courage the soul."

When Moses had been long in the ilderness he was granted a vision the living God. An ordinary bush ok fire and was not consumed. othing changed in the shepherd's orld but God was there where He ad not been before. He stopped to ok at this great sight and was con- onted with an inescapable duty.

How often this happens. You open a innocent looking Book to read and our soul catches fire. You enter a miliar sanctuary or sit in your chair home for private devotions, and , this is the house of God, and is the gate of heaven." You listen plain preaching and suddenly the nd of God is on your shoulder and is voice says, "This is the way, walk in it." There is no recourse. He s spoken. Nor are the occasions al- ys formally religious. Often God's e shines in upon us through a eadful need, a cry for justice, a stful face. We know He is there be- use the call is to go up higher, to e thing that Jesus would do, and e choice is inescapable. We know e is there because there is a new wer within us to choose aright. It y take a lifetime to make a skep- al world believe in what we have n. This was true for Abraham and ses and Paul. Men could see noth- unusual in the sky or the desert sh or the dust-piled road to mascus, until their lives open- our eyes to the stars of pro- se, the burning presence, and the ht above the briliance of the noon- y sun. But they saw these things l they were not easily dissuaded. demons within mock your high eamed dreams and seen visions had ribed them to digestive disturb- ance or glandular malfunction and gone on in the low and comfortable way? How poor the earth without these sun-crowned souls! How whose hands are busy for God.

III

After the vision comes the load. For Moses there was a back-breaking burden. A slave- people to be given dreams for which they would be ready to risk death. Pharaoh, man of limitless power, to be faced in scenes never rivalled until Luther stood alone against the world. Seas to be crossed, a wilderness journey, enemies before and behind, and amid everything else perpetual complaints, threats of rebellion, and reflections on the quality of his leadership from those who did not lift a finger to help.

It was a terrible fight. Who would be willing to change places with Moses? Yet who would not be pleased to stand as he stood with Elijah and the Lord Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration, as our Saviour nerved Himself for His own dread ordeal? The last step in the making of a man is a heavy load to carry, a hard battle to fight unto the end.

But we do not fight alone. Our backs are not to the wall; behind us is God.

Robert Louis Stevenson is famous for his battle of the physic bottle and counterpane. Once as he worked at one of his romances he became weak and had to give up writing for dictation, then as his voice failed, for deaf and dumb language. After that he says, he tried to speak to his wife with his eyes but could only say one thing so they had to stop. Imagine his feelings upon reading in an English journal the comment of a reviewer who knew nothing of his personal life, that this Stevenson was evidently a youth who had no experience of life and its hardships. One good cold in the head, the reviewer thought, would make this blithe spirit sing in another key. The author wrote his critic a kindly note in which he said

in substance: You may know as much as I do about life's burdens, but you evidently haven't my resources. I have learned to lean back on the Eternal and so I am ready to fight, even with a broken sword.

An elder in a Philadephia church arose one evening when the Session had finished examining a class of boys for admission to Communion. Several of the others had spoken briefly of the need for personal surrender and of the demands Christ would make upon them. We knew him as a quiet man who had real sacrifices in the business world for the sake of his convictions. He was not given to delivering speeches. "I just wanted to say," he began, "that what these men have said is true but far more important than the things He asks of you are the things you can ask of Christ when the going is hard."

He was right! However rough the road, we are never left to travel alone. All the time God's hand is upon us, molding and shaping toward a sublime end. Faithful parents and good teachers and the hard blows of circumstance, a bush aglow and a load to carry, His creative will uses them all. It is not an easy road that leads from the helpless cry of an infant among the hosts of evil to the victory song of Moses and the Lamb which fills heaven's bright air, but however improbable there is such a road, and you may go that way, for God is still making men.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Roy Pearson, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts

Matthew 5:43-45

(From **The Hard Commands of Jesus**, copyright 1957 by Abingdon Press.)

A few years ago I found in my mail a letter from a troubled man. He had been reading the Gospel according to Matthew, and this is what he wrote to his pastor:

> "For a long time some of the verses in Matthew 5, which are said to be Matthew's report of the teachings of Jesus, have been a puzzle to me. Unless they mean something different than they say, I certainly cannot agree with them.
>
> "Elsewhere in the Bible we are taught to resist evil. Christ is said to have taken a whip to drive the tradesmen out of the temple. He resisted Satan in the wilderness. And today we believe that unless it is resisted, Communism will destroy Christianity.
>
> "If someone forced me to go with him while he committed a murder, I'd agree to go and do him one better if I followed the teachings of those verses. If someone entered my house to steal my piano, I'm taught to give him the rest of my furniture, if those verses are right. If someone espouses a cause which is commonly known to be wrong, unfair, and downright destructive, and it happens to affect my interests, I am to agree with him quickly, go along with his ideas, and go him one better if these
>
> "I guess I've said enough to let you know why I'm puzzled. I'm inclined to doubt that Jesus ever said any such thing."

Of all the teachings of Jesus h command that we love our enemi is certainly one of the hardest to b lieve, approve, or obey, and this l ter finds quick sympathy in alm anybody's heart. Turning the oth cheek, going the second mile, doi good to those who hate you, prayi for those who despitefully use y — conduct like that seems to be life of jumping off high buildings, feeding children broken glass, or a ing your cat to do the dishes; a

not wanting to believe, we try to escape the necessity. Perhaps Matthew made a mistake in his record, we tell ourselves. Perhaps Jesus did not mean his words to be taken seriously. Or perhaps they were intended only for his own land and time, and nineteen hundred years have made a world so different that living now, Jesus himself would disown these words of long ago.

Yet inwardly we know that this commandment lies close to the heart of Jesus' whole gospel, that such a man would never speak such words without meaning them, and that this concept handles depths of life which time can never change. We can believe Jesus' words or call them foolish. We can applaud them or scorn them. We can obey them or flaunt them. But however persistently we may wriggle, we can never quite escape the fact that this is what Jesus actually said, that he meant his words to be taken in utter seriousness, and that anyone who calls himself a Christian is under obligation to comply with them.

What then did Jesus have in mind when he said to his followers, "Love your enemies"? What are the implications of those words today? What do they mean for you and me?

I

For one thing, Jesus was certainly not referring to an act which, performed with literal exactness, would automatically win for a man the approval of God. There is nothing legalistic about this commandment of Jesus. Indeed, if obedience to Jesus' bidding in this matter were to be confined to the illustrations which he gives, many people would spend all their lives without any chance to respond. It is not often that anyone smites us on the cheek, or sues us for our coat, or compels us to walk a mile with him; and although Jesus doubtless intended his followers to obey him precisely in each of these instances whenever the occasion arose, these examples were meant principally to be windows on the wide and sunny life of love which he was describing. For it must have been as obvious to him as to us that the act of turning the other cheek or walking the second mile need not be synonymous with the kind of life he had in mind, and that a man might obey these specific commands without knowing the quality of heart and soul which gave the commands their meaning and power. He might turn the other cheek and be bitter about it. He might walk the second mile and hate the one who made him do it.

Nor did Jesus mean that we are to love **just** our enemies or that we are to love our enemies more than our friends. Any decent man would love his friends, and Jesus was taking it for granted that he did not have to tell his disciples to do what they already were doing. In his commandment to love the enemy he was simply choosing an extreme case, the most extreme case of which he could think. His followers were to put no limits on their love, he was saying. They were to love everybody — their friends, their acquaintances, and even their enemies.

Still further, Jesus did not mean that we must like the enemies who he commands us to love. When a boy and a girl decide to be married, they have liked each other before they have loved each other; but in the treatment of our enemies it is usually necessary that we love them before we like them, and every man will have many occasions to love people whom he never will like. The incredible diversity of human beings seems to indicate a providence of God in which each of us will like some people better than others and never like certain people at all. For the most part enemies are people whom we do not like, and although learning to love them may lead us also to like them, the fact that we dislike them has nothing to do with our need to obey the commandment

to love them.

Nor does loving our enemies prevent from disapproving of their opinions or conduct. It is possible that without actually liking another man we may still appreciate his skill and devotion, recognize that he is making a valuable contribution to the common life, and hence in the deepest sense "approve of him." But to love one's enemy does not require even this, and the probability is large that our enemy will be someone of whom we actively disapprove. A communist, a dishonest politician, the proprietor of a race track, the manager of a saloon, the owner of a house of prostitution — to assume that we must approve of such a person in order to love him would often reduce the words of Jesus to absurdity, and whatever else may be involved in loving our enemies, we are certainly not called up to minimize the distinctions between right and wrong which set one man against another and summon Christian people to a life of warfare in God's service.

And hence it needs to be understood that loving the enemy does not necessarily mean submitting to the enemy. Henry Hazlitt has written a sharp satire on "Man-Eating by Tigers." "Johnny," he says, "was walking through the woods on a lovely day. Suddenly a tiger sprang out of the underbrush and leaped at his throat. It was at this point that Johnny composed his great essay on the folly of fighting tigers. Continuous warfare between men and tigers, he pointed out, serves no constructive purpose whatsoever, and only can lead, in time, to the destruction of one side or the other. His essay emphasized the seamy aspect of this warfare . . . With bitter satire he ridiculed the bellingerent instincts of men and tigers, and the war hysteria whipped up by antitiger propaganda . . . The tiger was now upon him. But Johnny disdained to retaliate under any trumped up excuse of 'self-defense.' He urged, instead, a new peace conference . . . Unfortunately Johnny was not given time to put these thoughts into permanent form. He had barely completed the essay in his mind when the tiger's fangs closed on his throat."

There is sufficient fallacy in Hazlitt's words to keep us from swallowing them whole, but there is also enough truth to make it wrong for us to disregard them. Turning the other cheek and going the second mile do not mean resigning oneself to the triumph of evil, throwing up one's hand in easy defeat, and feeling that in surrender to what God abhors we have done what God wants. It may be that we are meant to be fools for Christ's sake, but surely we are not intended to be simply fools. It may be that we are meant to be pacifists in the sense that we are makers of peace, but certainly we are not intended to be passivists in the sense that we do nothing. It may be that we are meant to refrain from hating one who is evil, but definitely we are not intended to refrain from opposing him with a different power —doing good instead of evil, substituting prayer for persecution, overcoming the wrong with the right. For loving the enemy does not necessarily mean submitting to the enemy. It does not mean blandly acquiescing while the enemy treats us in a way which corrupts his own soul and thwarts the will of God both for him and for us.

II

But so much for the negative aspects of the problem. What now about the positive? Thus far we have been thinking about some of the attitudes which loving the enemy does not involve. Let us think next about some of the steps which loving the enemy does entail.

First, then, when we love our enemies, we utterly repudiate hatred and malice in our thoughts about them. Whether we like them or dislike them, whether we approve of them or disapprove of them, whether

e submit to them or resist them — here is no place in love for ill will, esire to hurt, or delight in destroy-g.

It would be futile to claim that ven this phase of loving our enemies simple or easy. Bliss Perry writes at one day he and some other boys sked their Sunday School teacher out the Bible verse, "As much as th in you, live peaceably with all en." The teacher had been fluently pounding the doctrine of non-re-stance, but one of the boys was not tisfied. "Suppose the other fellow eps pitching on you all the time?" asked. "Well," the teacher replied, suppose sometimes it just doesn't in you!"

But Eric Hoffer speaks the needed ord when he says, "We are made nd by being kind." The ability to ve our enemies is acquired like any her skill. We learn to love by lov-g. One by one, step by step, and y by day we practise doing what e do not yet know how to do, and fore we turn to anything else in our lationships with the people whom e disapprove and oppose, we are lled upon by this commandment Jesus to banish hatred from this rticular intention, this specific rd, this individual act.

Second, when we love our enemies, recognize who our enemies ac-ally are. Outside a maternity ward Chicago two men struck up a con-rsation and made a startling dis-very: they lived on the same street d their expectant wives were sist-s who had not met for twenty-five ars. And a discovery like that is herent in the love of our enemies— discovery that God is the Father all men, that He created every-dy, that our enemies are our broth-s, and that every war is thus a il war.

Loving the enemy means achiev-g the victory which Caroline Stick-y suggests in "A Daughter of the ritans." Whenever she and her ter quarreled, their mother would place them in two chairs, facing each other, and bid them to look straight into one another's eyes and on no account to smile. But soon they would smile; and then laugh; and the bad feelings would be gone. Loving the enemy demands that we really see the enemy — see him as a child of God like ourselves, see him as our brother, see him as a member of our own family.

In the third place, loving our enemies requires understanding our enemies. Think, for example, about the young Abraham Lincoln as the best people of his time must have seen him. Here was an awkward and ungainly man whose pants were generally five inches too short for his legs, who seldom had more than one suspender, and who frequently wore neither vest nor coat. He was subject to unpredictable fits of depression, and many of his friends often thought him mad. On at least one occasion he himself consulted an eminent medical man in the hope of saving his sanity, and razors from his reach lest he commit suicide and end everything. He was famous for the telling of stories which charitable people called vulgar and less tactful people labeled unclean. At last he became engaged to a lovely and accomplished girl, and on the wedding day the large company of distinguished guests gathered at the designated place only to turn away disappointed: the groom did not appear.

See no more of Lincoln than such words as these reveal, and you might find it hard to love him. You would know his fears but not his dreams, his weakness but not his strength, the common clay with which God fashioned him but not the new and mighty spirit struggling to be born in him. And we shall not love the people whom we do not like until we understand them — know the origins from which they came, recognize the pressures which have bent and twisted them, discern the secret burdens which have sapped away

their strength and objectivity, appreciate the fear and guilt and hope which make them what they are.

And then, fourth, it is a part of loving our enemies that we actively seek their welfare. This does not mean helping the burglar rob a bank or giving the drunken driver another drink. But neither does it mean demanding that our enemy be lovable before we love him. Alan Paton has said that "he who waits until the time is ripe often waits until it is rotten," and loving our enemy requires that we seize the initiative ourselves, discover what God intends that our enemy should be or have or do, and then aid our enemy to accept God's will for himself and obey it.

Arrogance is not so much a sign of strength as of weakness, and when we love an arrogant man, we help him find enough strength to be humble. Dishonesty is not so much an evidence of malice as of insecurity, and when we love a dishonest man, we welcome him to friendship which restores his confidence. Cruelty, vindictiveness, lust, greed — the qualities which we dislike in our enemies are not beings in themselves, something which can be stamped out with a heavy boot, or pierced with a knife, or killed with a gun. These are simply the words with which we describe the particular twist which has been given to a personality or the special stain which has been imposed on a life. Our enemy does not want to be a stained or twisted individual. The likelihood is great that he hates himself with much steadier intensity than that of anybody else who hates him, and when we love him, we thrust our way through his ugly corrosions, ally ourselves with the God-created soul within, and try to steady the weak and blinded spirit as he struggles upward into strength and light.

III

But what motive do we have for a life of that kind? There is incredible self-denial in Christian love of the enemy. There is interminable patience. There are sacrifice, humiliation, pain, and perhaps even death. And why should any reasonable man subject himself to such suffering when he is not forced to undertake it? Why not ignore our enemy if that is possible, and destroy him if we cannot ignore him?

There are at least three sound motives for loving our enemies, and the first of them is simple decency. It is highly probable that there are those who find us as unattractive as we have found our enemies, and if our enemies have fallen short of the glory of God, could not the same be said of us? Wishing to be judged ourselves not solely in terms of our achievements but also in terms of our intentions and our handicaps, have we any reason not to use the same standards in the judgment of our enemies? Seeing a man with a sick body, we do not shoot him, and why should we treat differently a man with a sick soul? Let a man be crippled by paralysis, and his infirmity commands a double measure of our helpfulness; and why should we not react in the same way toward the person crippled by ignorance or guilt or fear? So the first motive for loving our enemies is simple decency.

The second is more important: Jesus commands that we love them. "Love your enemies," he said. His words are clear and unmistakable, and unless the central claim of Christianity is false, the commandment of Jesus is the commandment of God. We are to love our enemies that we may be sons of the Father in heaven who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. We are to love our enemies that we may be "perfect" as our heavenly Father is perfect. In any realistic approach to the problem this commandment of Jesus ought to put an end to rational objection. If a given act or attitude is known to be the will of God, there is no reasonable alternative to obedience, is there? It is not significant

hat we fail to understand God's urposes. It is not important that we oubt God's wisdom. And it does not natter that we find the task forbidding and repulsive. Unless Jesus was fraud, he comes to us as God's ambassador and faithfully reports God's ill to us, and refusing to love our nemies becomes something more han disobedience to a single commandment; it becomes a repudiation f Jesus and a defiance of God which houghtful Christians cannot find ther than intolerable.

The third motive for loving our nemies grows out of the second: here is no other way of doing what eeds to be done. A man goes to the entist not because he enjoys the entist's drill but only because there no other way of keeping his teeth good condition. A woman practices cales on the piano not because she kes delight in the repetition of the melodious measures but only beause there is no other way of learng to play the piano. And we love ur enemies not because we find the ndeavor initially pleasant but only ecause there is no other way of esblishing justice, building peace, and aking earth the fair and goodly nd which God intended it to be.

If God is not mocked Himself, ither does He make fools of his eatures, and He never imposes up- anyone a commandment which is npossible, unnecessary, unwise, or surd. We are to love our enemies cause God commands us to love em, but taking up the unwanted sk, we are never to doubt that God uld not ask it of us if it were not His only means of doing what needs to be done both for our enemies and for ourselves. There are some things which not even God can do, and when He finds us attempting the abundant life on the highways of hatred, we must appear to Him like the three-year-old Ethel Roosevelt clamoring to be allowed to "pick strawberries from the cherry tree."

A. E. Housman writes about "the sword that will not save," and God knows that the sword **never** saves. A former chief of staff in the Royal Air Force has said that only the long-range bombing planes can prevent World War III, but God is not naive enough to believe that "security for half the world can be achieved by creating a sense of insecurity in the other half, and that nations can get what they want most by preparing for what they want least." Who ever heard of hatred building an enduring home, a worthy friendship, a happy neighborhood, a sound economy, or a stable nation? And what cause have we to think that motives which have failed on every other level of human relationships will be successful when we widen our horizons to embrace the world?

Far from being the impractical idealism which many people think, the commandment to love our enemies is the only realistic choice before us. If we do not love them because we want to, we shall love them at last because we have to. There is no other answer to evil. There is no other alternative to chaos.

IE DRUDGERY OF HEROISM

Clarence J. Forsberg, First Methodist Church, Eugene, Oregon

Christopher Fry is a man who has way with words. Some of us find s plays hard to understand, but he s the gift of coming up with phras- that cannot be forgotten or easily missed. The topic of this sermon is such a phrase, from his play **The Dark Is Light Enough.** Gettner, a despicable character, is speaking to Gelda and he says, "Your mother pitched the night on a heroic level. But now we have come to the drudgery

of heroism. So far you've spoken. But now's the time when you have to drag out the plain length of your magnificent word."

It was that phrase, "the drudgery of heroism," that caught my attention. We are more apt to think of heroism in terms of glamour, than of drudgery. If we were playing one of those word association games, and I were to say the word "hero," you would be apt to respond with words like "medals" or "battlefield" or perhaps "headlines." You see, for most of us, it means some kind of momentary response to a crisis, in which a person rises far above the usual level of behavior. We are not always sure what causes it, but it is spectacular and sensational, and we are quick to applaud it.

But there is another kind of heroism that often times goes unnoticed. It is the heroism that is displayed in some long, protracted encounter. It is more a quality of spirit and character than a single act. For every hero who finds himself in the spotlight of public attention, there are countless others who carry on day by day without applause or acclaim.

The kind of heroism I'm thinking of now is that sort which was described by Margaret Johnson in her book, **When God Says No.** She tells about three rules of self-discipline which she learned from her parents. They were: (1) Hold on, (2) Don't run, and (3) One more step! It is the kind of spirit that a friend of mine describes in his own mother, who had borne more than her share of hardship and disappointment. She used to tell her children, "When you reach the end of your rope, then tie a knot and hang on!"

I would suspect that there are some persons here who are heroic in this sense. It may be that they are faced with the prospect of adjusting to a whole new way of life because of some bereveament. It may be that they struggle with some physical infirmity which no one knows. It may be some human relationship which involves them with a heavy cross to bear, or some sense of responsibility which they must carry alone. Whatever it is, God knows there is more drudgery than glory. They may not think of themselves as being heroic. They may not appear to be heroes to the rest of us, yet they may well be heroes in the sight of God.

My whole premise is that in this old world of ours, there is more drudgery than glamour in true heroism.

I

Let me begin by speaking about heroic faith.

There is more drudgery than glamour in a heroic faith. Sometimes I hear people say wistfully, "It must be wonderful to have a great faith in God, and in immortality, and in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong!" They see someone who possesses such faith, and seem to think that he is the recipient of a special gift or blessing, something that came to him full grown and without struggle or price. But if you were to talk to such a one, you would discover that a faith like that does not often came as a gift from heaven. It is not won in a single decisive encounter, but rather in a long struggle that may last as long as life itself.

One of the men whose name shines brightly in the pages of American church history did not win his faith easily. As a young man, he was on the faculty of an Eastern university. He considered himself an agnostic and had only a casual interest in religion. There was a contemporary revival of interest in religion in university life at that time, and eventually there came a day when in fairness to his own students, he had to decide where he stood on the matter of Christianity. He said that he sat late one night in his own study, and began to list on a piece of paper all the pro's and con's that came to mind. He had drawn a line down the

center of that sheet, and on the left hand side he listed the things he considered negative. He was convinced that the Bible was a collection of Jewish and Chaldean folklore and legend. There was no "scientific evidence of immorality" that he could discover. It was all too apparent that "righteous men suffered," while "evil men seemed to prosper." The negative list was a long one. On the positive side, he could find only one thing to list. It was this, "I believe that there is an eternal distinction between right and wrong." At last he came to the conclusion that he could not dismiss what he did believe because of what he did not believe. It was his starting place.

Well, we need a starting place. There may be someone here who feels that his faith is anything but heroic! He has only the narrowest kind of foothold. I would say to that person: "Don't despise it because it is small. It is your starting place. Cling to it, and it can lead to the kind of faith which makes all the difference in the world."

Dr. Roy L. Smith recalls a night in his own childhood when his father was ill. Someone had to go to the barn to care for the cattle. "Roy," his father said "You'll have to light the lantern and go out." He opened the door, but quickly returned, saying, "Dad, it's so dark that I can't even see the barn out there." His father answered, "Son, you don't have to see the barn. You can see the path, and the lantern will give you enough light for the next step. Just go along the path, and you'll have light for the next step all the way to the barn." Thinking back to that night across the years, Dr. Smith realized that he had been learning a basic lesson about life. God gives us sufficient light, when we are willing and ready to take a step at a time.

Josiah Holland put it into verse:

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount it's summit round by round.

There is more durdgery than glamour when it comes to having a heroic faith.

II

The second thing I want to speak about is a heroic love.

I have in mind now the love of a courtship or of a marriage, the love of a family circle, or a friend for his friend, even the love of the Christian community. There is a lot of glamour in a brilliant love affair, and sometimes it makes good copy. But love that is of heroic proportions is the kind that grows as people learn to understand each other, and grow in mutual concern for each other's welfare. Heroic love grows out of careful attention to the responsibilities and obligations of that relationship, whatever it might be. That is what might be called the "drudgery of heroic love."

There was a layman once who took an honest look at his relationship to his church, a relationship that was seriously deteriorating. He came up with an amazing discovery. "I discovered," he said, "that when I get behind in my pledge one month, I notice that the choir doesn't sing as sweetly as it did before. When I get behind in my pledge two months, I begin to see more hypocrites sitting around me than I had noticed before. Then when I get behind in my pledge three months, I get awfully suspicious of the preacher."

The same kind of correlation is apparent in a love affair. When we become careless about the duties and responsibilities of love it begins to lose it's shine. We ought not be like the man Darrell Berg mentioned some months ago, who hadn't kissed his wife for twenty years, and then shot the man who did!

There is more drudgery than glamour in a heroic love affair. I've al-

ways loved that incident from Channing Pollock's play, **The House Beautiful,** in which Archie sits down wearily on the sofa beside Jennifer. He sighs deeply and says, "I'm not a big man, Jen." "Who said so?" she fires back "What is a big man?" "Oh, Henry Ford," he answers. Then Jennifer smiles and asks, "What is a failure?" Archie answers, "A fellow who ends up where he started." "That all depends," she tells him "If you are holding a fort—say your house or your soul—it is a great thing to end up where you started."

Heroism is sometimes made up of some unheroic components. A heroic love, like a heroic faith, depends upon choices that are made day by day in these undramatic lives of ours, but made in the right direction. Some of us, in our loves, would do well to remember that there is more drudgery than glamour in realizing a heroic kind of love.

III

Now let's change directions once more, and consider a heroic moral position.

All of us have known persons who were heroic in their mortality and integrity. They stand out like giants among us, and while we may not always agree with their position, we admire their courage and strength in fighting for an ideal or a conviction. But how does a person become that kind of a hero? Is he born to it, with some inner strength that is an endowment rather than an achievement? I think not. Rather, it seems to me, when you find that kind of a person you are seeing someone who has first of all been "faithful in little things," and is therefore capable of the bigger things. Fritz Kunkel speaks of "the principle of the little steps." By this, he means to say that before a man learns to run he must learn to walk. Here is a little child in your own home who is learning to walk. He tries those first wobbly step, often times he falls, and sometimes he hurts himself. He reaches out desperately for somthing to keep him steady. He fails and tries again, but you know that every time he gets back up and starts out again, he is that much closer to the day when he can stand alone, and walk on his own two feet. The same principle is involved in learning to stand on our own two feet morally. It is a struggle, and there is a certain drudgery implied. But the end result is maturity.

There is a facetious story about a man who went big game hunting in Africa, even though he was unfamiliar with the use of firearms. One day he wandered away from his party, and was suddenly startled to find himself confronted by not one, but two lions. It was a crucial moment, and he realized that he had only two shots left in his rifle. Just as the lions leaped out to attack him, he drew a bead on the first one and dropped him. But he fired again at the second lion, and missed him completely. However, the lion in leaping over the fallen animal leaped too far, and went completely over the hunter's head. It was a narrow escape, and when he got back to camp, his guide told him that he had better stay close and practice shooting. Every day he would go out a little way from camp, and practice his shooting so that he would never miss again. One day, as he was practicing, he heard some noise in the brush close by. He peered cautiously through the foliage, and there he saw that old lion. The lion was practicing small leaps!

If there is a moral to that story—and it takes little straining to find one—it would be that we need to practice the art of the small leap. The man who wants to be a moral champion, must train as seriously and as conscientiously as any athlete. There are no shortcuts to this kind of heroism. And many times there is more drudgery than glamour to defending a position in which one finds himself almost alone.

Sometime ago a special session o

the Florida legislature was called for the express purpose of passing laws to avoid compliance with the Supreme Court rulings on segregation in the schools. Ninety members were present; eighty-nine voted for the legislation, one voted against. His name was John Orr, and he was voting in accordance with his conscience. He rose to speak on a point of personal privilege. "I believe segregation is morally wrong. The existence of second class citizens is repugnant to our great democratic principles . . . Had we devoted as much talent to discovering means to live under the law, instead of defiance of it, we could have discovered a way."

There was a shocked and silent House when he was through. Some of the members expressed admiration for his courage, but everyone assumed that he had committed political suicide. In a way it was tragic, because from his early boyhood he had longed for a political career. He could have kept quiet, but felt forced to speak, and elections were coming up with with his own among them. He was not a self-styled martyr or Messiah. He did not want to hold an unpopular position for the satisfaction of standing alone. He was simply being true to his convictions. There was a recall movement, but it failed. The story has a happy ending, as far as democracy is concerned, because when the voters of Dade County went to the polls, they sent him back to the Legislature for another term by a plurality of 20,000 votes!

But this was something that he could not have foreseen when he took his stand. And for every John Orr, there are countless others who lose the election and sacrifice ambition and career, because they deem it necessary to stand up for principles. This takes moral courage of the highest order. How can any man measure up to that kind of heroism? Well, he doesn't do it by just being courageous on occasional big issues. He does it by being faithful to his principles in the little decisions that confront him every day.

There is more drudgery than glamour when it comes to taking a heroic moral stand!

I hope that I have spoken a pertinent word to someone here. You may be the one who is being challenged to a great faith. Or again, you may be that person who is called to a heroic love. Maybe there is some one here this morning who is destined to stand nine fet tall in public life or in politics, in the church or in the community. It is not an easy thing in any case. It will never be easy. You will learn to know the meaning of drudgery. But this, I am convinced, is what heroism means in the eyes of God.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

(Continued from Page 2)

& Brothers, 228 pp., $3.95)

A Companion to the Bible, ed. by J. J. Von Allmen, is a dictionary which has been prepared by distinguished European scholars and subsequently translated into English. The book features the most common terms and ideas associated with biblical studies, developing major topics to a considerable length. The format is similar to **A Theological Word Book of the Bible,** ed. by Alan Richardson (1950), although the present volume is written in a less technical manner and covers many more subjects. It has furthermore the advantage of a Continential point of view which is seldom made available to American pastors. (Oxford University Press, 1512 pp., $6)

Two splendid books by distinguished rabbis will appeal to Christian pastors. **Rabbinic Stories for Christian Ministers and Teachers,** edited by William B. Silverman, is a wonderfully suggestive and useful collection

of stories, anecdotes and spiritually-perceptive writings from the Midrash, Talmudic literature, and the teachings of the Hasidic rabbis. As a volume of homiletic illustrations, this book will be of continuing value to pastors who will find here a rich treasure of warm, human and illuminating matter. (Abingdon, 221 pp., $3.50). **Prayer, Humility and Compassion** by Samuel H. Dresner of the Congregation Beth El, Springfield, is a devotional book of rare beauty and spiritual sensitivity. The profound insights and moving testimony of the author are embellished by generous references to the lore and wisdom of ancient and modern Judaism. (Jewish Publication Society, 254 pp., $3)

Riverside Sermons is an omnibus edition containing forty sermons of enduring significance from the various books by Harry Emerson Fosdick and published to honor his eightieth birthday. Here are to be found sermons, gleaned from a fifty-year ministry, which shall long be read for their evangelical fervence and depth. The selection was made by Charles L. Wallis. (Harper & Brothers, 362 pp., $3.95)

Intercessory Prayer by Edward W. Bauman of American University is a very important study, written with clarity and forceful persuasiveness, on praying for others with power, love and understanding. The thoroughness of the author's examination of the bases of such prayer and his thoughtful suggestions concerning its development and practice, make this book a valuable aid for both private devotions and public instruction. (Westminster, 112 pp. $2)

So You Want to Preach by Frederick Keller Stamm is an excellent, challenging and altogether inspiring book to place in the hands of the prospective or new minister, and tells with great wisdom and deep understanding of the varied roles of the pastor, the pitfalls he faces and the opportunities that are his. (Abingdon, 109 pp., $2)

Reaching People from the Pulpit by Dwight E. Stevenson and Charles F. Diehl is a first-class guide to effective sermon delivery, the most practical and praiseworthy volume of its kind to have come to the attention of this reviewer. The book is for all pulpit practitioners, the youthful and the seasoned, and will, if read with thoughtfulness and discernment, greatly enlarge the pulpit effectiveness of any of the Lord's ambassadors. The book concerns the mechanisms of speech production, the foundations for speech improvement, the use of gestures, and the psychological implications of creative speaker-listener contact, together with an extremely useful and revealing self-help program for personal improvement. (Harper & Brothers, 172 pp., $3)

Leading in Public Prayer, written by Andrew W. Blackwood, a master counsellor for pastors, considers all forms of pulpit prayers, their nature, function, preparation, content and utterance. (Abingdon, 207 pp., $3)

YOU AND YOUR TROUBLE

Charles F. Jacobs, First Congregational Church, Waterloo, Iowa

"In the world you have trouble, but courage!—I have conquered the world."

—John 16:33 (Moffatt)

Let us start out by facing the situuation frankly. How to cope with trouble is our number one problem. We have a summary way of alluding to this fact; we say that "life is no bed of roses." Each of us knows that this is a literal truth. "Never morning wears to evening," says the poet, "but some heart breaks." Adversity, like the tornado and the earthquake, is no respector of persons. It arrives unannounced and does not reveal the time of its departure. It visits the gentle and the cruel alike. It leaves its mark on the "hermit soul that lives withdrawn" and the nameless faces that make up the "lonely crowd." The old Negro spiritual, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen," can be appropriately sung by rich and poor, wise and foolish, youth and age. Neither material possessions nor great wisdom provide a guarantee against suffering.

An ancient holy man observed: "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble." The fictional man John Bunyan saw in his vision in Bedford jail with a "great burden upon his back" is each one of us. In each life there is, to borrow a phrase from Henry James, "a Bench of Desolation," and each must wrestle with "the terrible algebra" which is his own.

We cannot avoid trouble for long. As Jacob wrestled with the heavenly angel, so each must grapple with his own adversity. Lest you give yourself over to self-pity and despair, I would remind you that this struggle, this restlessness implanted in each of us, is the price man pays for being man.

Some years ago John McCutcheon caught this truth in a cartoon which appeared in the Chicago Tribune. The title of the cartoon was: "Gentleman Discussing with Friend the State of the World." The artist depicted a man sitting in his lounge, with the newspaper scattered on the floor headlining Christmas shopping, bitterness, war and strife, talking to his dog. "Here I am," said the man, "I gotta get up early and work all day long and come home all tired out, ready to fall in bed. And you, you play and sleep all day long and when I come home, all tired, you want to play. Ah, you have a grand life. When you die you are dead and when I die, mebbe I got to go to hell yet."

Man has been described as a problem-solving animal. In trying to cope with trouble we need the insight and the perspective of the New Testament. Indeed, Jesus himself had his burdens. Through all the ages he has been known as "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." As he foresaw the possibility of his own violent death, he exclaimed, "Now is my soul troubled." But he would not dodge it. "But for this cause came I into the world," said he. To his disciples he said: "In the world you have trouble, but courage!—I have conquered the world." In this passage Jesus does three things. He affirms the universality of trouble. "In the world you have trouble." His affirmation is followed with an admonition —"But Courage!" Then comes his confirmation of triumph. "I have conquered the world." And Jesus' disci-

ples came to believe that what their Lord had accomplished they, too, could accomplish. And through twenty centuries, those who have been led by his spirit, have likewise believed that what their Master accomplished they could also achieve.

What is the Christian approach to trouble? What does Jesus have to say about you and your trouble?

I

Consider, first, that trouble is real and cannot be denied or avoided for long. There are some people so apprehensive of trouble and its attendant pain that they adopt the expedient of denying its reality. Pain, they say, is not real and exists only in the mind. But this is no solution to the ravages of adversity. Trouble is real, like a gash in a fair canvas, and sometimes our resistance to it seems as mere weakness.

Others may adopt the view that suffering is a virtue. It is so frequently intertwined with the achievements of the great souls that it does appear that suffering is a good thing. But such is not the case. Trouble and pain represent a terrible assault upon our dignity, our integrity; and it is only through our heroic effort to triumph that we are able to conquer the adversaries that dispute the passage with us. Trouble can be mean and totally destructive. Take a walk down "skid row" and you will see how mean adversity can be. No, my friends, trouble is an evil, and like any other evil is to be avoided when possible. If it were a good thing we would go out of our way to induce it, but only the fanatics do that. Why it must exist in a world whose controlling power is a good God is a question to which we have no completely satisfying answer. Suffice it to remember that: "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now we know in part; then we shall understand fully."

There are, however, some helpful clues to the origin of trouble. Daily we wrestle with troubles that are the result of nature's violence. Man's little strength pitted against the blizzard, the flood, the fire, the plaque, the famine, the tornado, the earthquake, seems puny and ineffective. Perhaps more to be feared than the earthquake and the flood are the enemies of the microscopic and submicroscopic world — the bacteria and viruses — that are ambushed in the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe. However, man lives in the midst of these troubles with a courage equal to defiance. Tornados and earthquakes may level the city of man but, in utter disregard of nature's protest, he returns and rebuilds his home. As a boy I lived in the Mississippi valley where, again and again, I saw disastrous floods sweep away crops and inundate large sections of our town. But man has maintained his foothold on the banks of the Father of Waters. He has built dams and dikes which give him a measure of protection against the old enemy — the flood.

Again, there are troubles which arise from our own nature. Beneath the gentle surface of man there is the unending struggle between the angel and the brute. The old theologians called this original sin. Sigmund Freud saw this turbulent area in which selfish, beastly drives exist, and over which the ego and the superego strive to establish control, and he called it the Id. Aronld Toynbee, in his book **An Historian's Approach to Religion**, gives a graphic illustration of the nature of human nature. There are two possible views of the garden city, Los Angeles, California — the aerial and the pedestrian. To the pedestrian who sees the sprinklers turning on the lawns, the product of a non-existent rainfall, it is a city of vast expanses and beautiful homes. He may be shocked when he sees a vacant lot conquered by the savage sage-brush pushing up out of the parched ground, but the pedestrian cannot comprehend the meaning of this. Only when one flies over a com-

munity does he see that the garden city "is merely a tiny patch of verdure marooned in the midst of a vast desert. He then realizes that under the artifical green lawns, the same savage Nature that has here broken its way to the surface is all the time eagerly waiting for an opportunity thus to come into its own." Man is constantly dealing with troubles that erupt from his untamed nature. Some of his sharpest grief is the result of his own perverse nature.

There are also the troubles that arise from the evil that other people do. There are no private funerals. No man ever suffers alone. What we do —affects for good or evil — the lives of others. We are tied together in a bundle of life and when the law of the bundle has been violated all must suffer.

Many of our troubles arise from the fact that man is an animal capable of making choices. By his very nature he is always reaching out for new worlds to conquer. In this forward thrust he often brings trouble upon himself. It is not because he seeks it; rather, trouble is incidental to man's effort to extend the boundaries of his experience and knowledge. Man is forever lured on by the horizon. He mounts one summit and a new vista calls to him; he longs to anchor his flags at the extremes of his universe. He has built wings and flown above the clouds and now he probes the stratosphere for a route to the moon and the stars. It is inevitable that some trouble will result from his reach toward the stars.

II

Since trouble cannot be avoided for long, what are some of the essential steps to take if we are to meet and master our problems? First, we must face our trouble in all its consequences. The person most likely to establish mastery over difficulty is the one who has anticipated trouble, faced it in his imagination. The late Dr. Ellsworth Faris said that the religious use of the imagination is to project oneself into the future, to anticipate how one would react when the storm descends. In this way, for example, the individual is able to cope with death, for, before death arrives, he has faced the fact that some day his beloved will die and he must go on alone. When grief arrives such an individual has already established a structure by which he responds to his difficulty.

Failing in this, one must, when the day of troubles arrives, face the fact of trouble in all its dimensions. Until this has been accomplished, one cannot begin to handle his difficulties. Betsey Barton, in her book, **And Now to Live Again,** makes the wise observation: "When we have faced our hurt, when we have faced it fully and all its consequences, and when we have learned to deal with it in all times and in all ways, then and then only can it be said that reeducation has begun." Admittedly, this is not easy to do, and some find it impossible to make an honest admission of failure. I venture to say that whoever you are you will never meet your trouble successfully until you have faced fully the nature of your trouble successfully until you have faced fully the nature of your difficulty. Henry James, now recognized as one of America's literary giants, fought against devastating critics in his day. When he turned to playwriting he fared worse. His **Guy Domville,** which represented the labors of five years, was presented at St. James Theatre, London, January 5, 1895. It was a terrible failure on the opening night. Many days later he wrote to his distinguished brother, William James, and poured out the burden of his heart. "Even now it's a sore trial for me to write about it," he said, "weary, bruised, sickened, that—after immense labour of preparation and unspeakable tension of suspense has, in a few brutal moments, not gone well." Sometimes life does reject and destroy our hopes. However, there is the possibility of

victory in the midst of defeat if one has the courage to face his trouble in all its consequences.

A difficulty faced objectively, loses much of its terror. What, in the beginning, looked like a blackout turns out to be a shadow. A mother and father I know were stricken by the sudden and unexpected death of their only child. For a long time they refused to accept the fact of death. The child's room was maintained and the parents lived as if the child were absent for only a visit. There was no healing for them until, unable to bear their suppressed grief longer, they came at last to accept the fact of their child's death. Once they had faced their grief, they were ready to live again, to give the child immortality in their own lives.

III

The next step in dealing with your trouble is to take the initiative and to make a creative response to your problem. The big thing in the story of the Prodigal Son is the fact that the lad took the initiative. Against the wishes of his father, the son had gone to the city and squandered the best years of youth in foolish adventure. At last he came to the swine pasture where he fed on the husk that the swine would not eat. But something happened that day to the discouraged youth that was to change his life. In a swine pasture he knelt down and lifted his face toward God and said: "I will arise and go to my Father. And I will say to him, Father I have sinned." No wonder the world can never forget the Prodigal. That boy might be your son or mine, or he might have been anyone of us when we were young. The important thing to remember is that, in the midst of suffering, he had the courage to say: "Father, I have made a mistake." Once he had faced his trouble in all its consequences and responded to it creatively the lad was on the road to recovery.

With the ability to take the initiative in dealing with trouble must also go the capacity to take the long view. Endurance is an essential, "Nothing is changed unless you change it yourself," says Dr. Hutschnecker, "unless you embark on a program of change." That is the minimum requirement for the overcoming of trouble. Frequently, one hears it said that the drunkard could change if he exercised his will power. What such an observer fails to understand is that the will power is in the habits. The drunkard can indeed become a sober man, but first he must change his habits. No matter what your trouble — be it the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a broken home, a severed friendship — you must cultivate patience. Victorious living is made up of a host of small achievements. I always warn people wrestling with some enormous difficulty that they must anticipate the reversals, the throwbacks, the alternating moods of defeat and victory. Lillian Hellman, in her play, **Autumn Garden**, causes one of her characters to say: "There are no big moments you can reach unless you've a pile of smaller moments to stand on."

IV

Finally, when the storms descend upon your life, the big thing to remember is that you are not alone. There are others, many others, who are making the journey with you. If it is an illness which involves the hospital and surgery, you are not alone. The dedicated hearts and hands of the doctors and nurses are interlocked with yours, working with you for the triumph over your trouble. Often, in our weakness, we are made aware of the strength which we derive from others. Howard Vincent O'Brien said that when he received the red-starred telegram from the War Department telling him of his son's death he felt he could not endure. But something happened and he was able to carry on. Suddenly he realized what had happened. It was letters. Expressions of sympathy

and love had come from far and near and these outstretched hands of compassion gave him courage to carry on with "an active sense of well-being." We are strengthened in resistance to trouble by our friends, those blessed people who come to us in our grief and wrap the mantle of their love about us. In their encircling arms we feel the strength of the everlasting arms.

Beyond the help which our friends give is our faith in God. Indeed, "The Lord is our strength and our refuge, a very present help in trouble." Saint Paul could say: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Some of us who see so much of the overcoming of trouble are quick to admit that God is the decisive power. Friends can stand on the sideline and encourage, but God gives the healing. You have exhausted all your resources, spent your money going from doctor to doctor and finally to the fraud, and still there is no healing. Then something happens. "God hears the sound of your weeping," and you turn to him and in him you are made whole.

Christian friends, whatever your trouble, do not despair. Remember him who said: "In this world there will be trouble, but courage! — I have conquered the world." If we give ourselves up to him and face our problems in his spirit we will with confidence be able to say:

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters;
He restores my soul.

ON MAKING CHRIST REAL TO YOURSELF

Paul Stromberg Rees, First Covenant Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. —John 14:9.

"Is Jesus Christ real to you?" That was the question which a college senior put to Dr. George Truett after a chapel service during which Truett had presented the claims of Christ in forthright and challenging fashion.

It was near the close of a special series of meetings. Christian members of the senior class had waited on the guest preacher to tell him that they were deeply concerned for one member of their class who seemed wholly sceptical about the Christian message and the Christian way of life. They acknowledged that he was the most brilliant student in their group, but, said they, "He does not accept what you are saying. He does not accept what we profess."

The young man stood before Dr. Truett after listening to a sermon on the text, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." The two were alone in a conference room. Dr. Truett had asked him to be seated, but he said, "No, I do not need to sit down, I'll be through in just a minute."

It was a frank young man who looked into the face of the preacher. "I believe in you," he announced, "or I would not be here at all. I think you are entirely candid and sincere. Now, he went on, "will you forget that you are a preacher, and that I am a senior to be graduated in a few weeks, and answer a question I am going to put to you?"

"Very well," replied Dr. Truett, "I will answer it if I can, and I will be entirely frank."

"All right," said the young man, "here is my question: Mr. Truett, is Jesus Christ real to you, by which

I mean, does your heart know, your life know, your brain know, your inner self know, that He helps you? Yes or no, is He real to you like that?"

It is a fair question. Take a walk down any man's street in any man's town, and you will find plenty of folks who are ready to ask it. They know that, somehow or other, He is not real to them. They wonder, moreover, if He is real to the church people who profess to be acquainted with Him and to be living for Him.

Sometimes, as in the case of this college senior, the question is asked by those who are openly sceptical. In more cases, however, it is asked, secretly if not audibly, by those within the very church itself, whose beliefs are all on the side of Christianity but who, nevertheless, have little, if anything, in the way of a personal realization of Christ in their daily living. There may be **contact**, but is there **communion**? The seed which fell upon stony ground, in our Lord's Parable of the Sower, made a contact; but there was no absorption, no communion between the seed and the soil, and hence no life.

Perhaps Christ is saying to some of us what He said to Philip long ago: "Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me?" It is evident, you see, that Christ wants to become very real to us who name Him as our Savior and Master. In sober fact He wants to be the most real person in your life, in my life, in every life. How can it be so? That is the inquiry to which we are giving ourselves in these moments.

The answers I shall suggest will be expressed in the simplest words. There will be no attempt to speak in the language of the theologian. Upon the contrary, there will be a deliberate effort, in this particular message, to avoid the formal religious phrases. What I shall have to say to you will be based solidly on the Word of God and upon the actual experiences of multitudes of questing souls who through the centuries have found Jesus to be, in the terms of Henry Baker's lovely hymn, "the Joy of living hearts." Our thoughts will revolve around three words: turn, trust, and talk.

I

Think first of the word **turn.** The Bible uses it again and again. One hears the prophet say, "**Turn ye, turn** ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" One hears the psalmist say, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and **turn** unto the Lord." One hears the historian Luke say that "a great number believed and **turned** unto the Lord." Jesus uses a word that means practically the same thing. He says, "Repent ye," which means, literally, to change the mind, to turn in one's inner vision and spirit. This gives us a good starting point for our discussion.

If you want Christ to become real to you, begin to **turn over** in your mind the question of how much you need Him. Within the recent days I have had before me two books, one by an author whose theology in some respects is not at all acceptable to me, the other by a man whose orthodoxy has never been questioned. But, interestingly enough, both men hold in common the conviction that reality in Christian experience and life begins with a disturbing **sense of lack** in the soul. "Every religious life begins in a sense of need," says the conservative. "No one achieves a vital, personal Christian experience without a profound sense of need," says the liberal.

You have tried to make a go of life without really surrendering to Christ. Are you now willing to stop and think, and to confess that, far down beneath all your laughter and your toil, beneath your loud talk or your tight-lipped scepticism, there is a gnawing sense of dissatisfaction? The demands of life have been great, and you haven't stood up to them very well. Or, the failures of life have been bitter, and the scars upon your

conscience are deep and ugly. Or, the vision of life's possibilities, faded as it is, will somehow not entirely leave you, and the result is that you are haunted with the feeling of incompleteness, frustration, disappointment.

Turn it all over in your heart. Face the facts without trying to dodge them or soften them. Be willing to see that your trouble is almost one hundred per cent inside of you: you need—greatly need — to know this Christ Who is searching your soul and drawing you to Himself.

The next step in turning has just suggested itself: **turn to** Christ. A few years ago a missionary sat and talked at length with Dr. Hu Shih, the father of the Renaissance movement in China. Dr. Shih, who called himself an agnostic, was being asked by the missionary to consider the claims of Christ upon his life. He did not surrender to Christ, but as the conversation came to a close he took the hand of the missionary in both of his, and to that missionary he made this significant statement: "Yes, after all, you have a great advantage in that your ideas are embodied in a Person." China has never lacked for ideas. Its ancient and remarkable culture has been rich in ideas and maxims and ethical sayings of splendid insight. But China, through the centuries, has not known the Person — the once-crucified but ever-living Person — Who offers Himself in the power that will inwardly change life so that it fits into the pattern of our best ideals.

Someone has said, "Life is never free until it has found a Master," by which is meant of course a worthy master. Christ is that Master! When Jesus stilled the tempest on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples exclaimed, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the waves obey him?" Some people have doubted that miracle. They shouldn't — not after looking into the lives of those whose inner tempests have been stilled by this so strong and willing Savior. Tempests of greed and jealousy and sexual lust and overweening pride have been mastered and brought into subjection when they have been turned over to Him.

The **turning over** and the **turning to** must be accompanied by a **turning from:** turn from every known practice of sin. I am one of those unfortunate individuals who have had to wear glasses from childhood. How many times, on a bitter winter's day, I have passed out of the grey gloom of the street into the bright warmth of, let us say, a great department store. Perhaps it was holiday time and the place was pretty and gay with its Christmas decorations and its thousands of articles waiting to be admired and purchased. But, as for me, in that moment of entering, I could scarcely see a thing: my glasses were all steamed over.

Sin is the steam on your glasses, preventing you from seeing and relishing the bright joys and the radiant peace that are freely offered by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If I were to complain to the manager of a store that something was wrong with them because I couldn't see their goods, I would be no more foolish than you are when, with the steam of unconfessed wrong on the lenses of your soul, you complain that you do not see anything glorious or attractive about the Christian life.

II

Now think a moment of the word **trust.** Here again we have a term with the best kind of standing in the Scriptures. It was a confident psalmist who said, "In thee, O Lord, do I put my **trust;** let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness." It was a jubilant prophet who, speaking for Israel, cried, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will **trust** and not be afraid." It was a witnessing apostle who said, "We **trust** in the living God, who is the Savior of all men."

Prof. Henry B. Wright, of Yale, labored long and fruitfully to win young people to a genuine surrender to Jesus Christ and to a new life through that surrender. But he who is successful in persuading others to trust must himself be a man of faith. Henry B. Wright was! And he tells us how it came about. He was attending the Northfield Bible Conference in the grand old days under Dwight L. Moody. An invitation came to him to join a group in Bible study under Mr. Moody's direction. Professor Wright says, "I was afraid I should be asked to go as a foreign missionary, but I went. There, seated in an armchair at one end of the room, was the greatest human I have ever known, Dwight L. Moody. He spoke to us simply and briefly about the issues of life, using John 7:17 as his theme: 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' There in the quiet, without anyone knowing what was going on, I gave myself to God . . . and I meant it."

That self-giving was an act of trust. It was the sort of trust — simple, sincere, humble — to which God always responds. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "Christianity is pure receptivity," says one. In a sense it is. Your trust is just your receptivity. You give yourself in faith to Christ: He gives Himself in grace to you. And the mutual giving and taking become a habitual process, like breathing. In this way does Christ become real to us. In this way do we experience His forgiveness, lay hold of His strength, find light for our feet and the supply of worthy motives for all good living. Will you take it?

III

If Christ is to be real to us, there is a third word we need to consider. It is the word **talk.** Along with turn and trust, it has good Biblical standing. Moses, for example, had been telling the children of Israel about God's will and desire for them. He then gathered up the meaning and burden of it all by saying, "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall **talk** of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In the New Testament we have the thrilling story of the two disciples who walked along the way to Emmaus and were overtaken by the newly risen Christ. Later, recalling their conversation with Him, they exclaimed, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he **talked** with us by the way?"

Mark you, it does not say, "as He talked **to** us," but "as He talked **with** us." It was a two-way conversation. And a little later, according to the rest of the account, we find them talking to others about Him. That pretty well completes the picture, from which we may draw certain practical suggestions.

If you want Christ to be real to you—growingly real, shall I say? — then **talk with Him.** Don't let yourself be cheated at this point by listening to the nonsense of those who argue that prayer has no value, that, at best, it is just a form of autosuggestion. The people who really pray know better. They may not have all the explanations but they have the power—which is the important thing.

Prove for yourself the meaning of Tennyson's lovely stanza:

> Speak to Him then, for He
> heareth thee,
> And spirit with Spirit will meet,
> For closer is He than breathing,
> And nearer than hands and feet.

Talk to Him about yourself, your problems, your work, your play, your example, your relations with other people. Have a place and time to do it. Learn, too, how to have the emergency talks with him when something goes wrong smack in the

thick of things in the day's living. You don't have to get on your knees. He knows when the knees of your soul are bending toward Him.

Then let Him talk to you. He will do it through His Word, through the teaching and preaching of His appointed ministers, through the Inner Voice within you. Saturate your mind and memory with the story of His earthly life and ministry. Know what He taught about God, about life, about temptation, about sin, about sorrow, about duty and service, about hell and heaven. If you are not willing to take time for this, blame nobody but yourself for the haziness and unreality of the Christian life to you.

Talk with others who really know Him. The sense of His living presence in your own experience will be intensified and enriched through contact with Christ-touched minds and Christ-filled hearts. This is one of the values of public worship. It is also one reason why each of us should make it a point to have friendly, informal fellowship with Christians who have gone far along the road of reality with Christ. John Wesley is known in Church history for his ringing emphasis upon our personal experience of Christ. It was a conference with William Law that gave him a vision of what it means to realize God's love for us in Christ, and a conference with Count Zinzendorf that helped to give him his vision of what it means to love God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength.

If you want Christ to be real to you, **talk about Him** to others who do not know Him. It is a simple psychological law that when we express a thing that has impressed us, we thereby deepen the impression. If we fail to express it, the impression fades. Impression without expression spells depression; impression plus expression spells progression.

A few years ago I read about a misisonary in Africa whom some one had described as "the loneliest woman in the world." For thirty years Mrs. Christina Forsyth had labored without a white helper among the black folks of the Dark Continent. To an outsider she appeared to be the world's loneliest woman. Was she? Listen to these words, spoken by her in reply to an expression of symathy over her lack of normal companionships: "All these years I have never once been alone, for I have always been conscious of the presence of Jesus."

Sir Ernest Shackleton, the famous explorer, was once caught in a furious storm in the Antarctic, his ship destroyed and his whole party stranded. For days they struggled toward some place of help, blinded and exhausted by the icy blasts that smote them. They finally got through to safety. When they did, a man by the name of Worsely looked over at Shackleton and, with misty eyes and reverent emotion, said, "Boss, I had a curious feeling that there was another person with us." And Shackleton replied, "So had I." After that, on all of his expeditions, Shackleton carried with him a phonograph and a recording of the hymn, "Abide with Me," with its haunting refrain, "I need Thy presence every passing hour."

You do need it, don't you? Well, you may have it! Now—and for ever!

HOW I WOULD EXPLAIN CHRISTIANITY TO SOMEONE WHO HAD NEVER HEARD OF CHRIST

Robert Cleveland Holland, First Presbyterian Church, Bath, New York

Somebody asked me the other day an intriguing question. It was this: "How would you explain Christianity for the first time to someone who

had never heard of Christ?" I hesitate to answer that, because a minister in America almost never meets a person who has not heard of Christ. And most explantations of Christianity are offered not to introduce Jesus Christ, but to make real and mature the picture — warped and childish — that probably already exists in the hearer's mind. But, on the other hand, it is a good thing for us all to turn over and spade up the fundamental grounds of our faith and beliefs. So then this is what I would say to a person who never heard of Jesus Christ:

Look around at the world where we live, and see in it the creating hand of Almighty God . . . the vast and unmeasured depths of the universe . . . the uncounted galaxies of stars that hang in space . . . our solar system, its planets and its unfathomable mystery of time . . . our world, life, Spring and Fall . . . conscience and intelligence; love, faith, and hope . . . the signs and manifestations of the Creator-God. As surely as you look at a painting, and seeing its contrasts of shadowed dark and rugged light, say, "This is Rembrandt," so you cannot fail to see God when you look at His painting of time and space and life.

But what kind of God is He? And how shall we worship Him? Does nature tell us of His personality? Is He a God of justice? Perhaps He is, because Spring follows Winter, and day follows night. But, on the other hand, perhaps He isn't, for the hurricane does not single out the evil to destroy, but as often the good.

Is He a God of love? Perhaps He is, for there is in us this great capacity for affection between each other and between man and his pets. But on the other hand, perhaps He isn't, for there is also the snake, the beast of prey, the germ, and death.

Is He a God who is close by me in the trials of life, or has He wound up the world like a watch-spring, and gone away to let it run by itself? It would seem sometimes as if He were very close indeed, for how else would a tender, inch-high seedling, or a trembling hatched bird in its nest, or a baby just learned to walk ever live and grow, theartened as they are, by perils on every side. But, again, sometimes it seems as though God is impersonal and uninterested, because some trees, and some birds, and some babies do suffer and die.

Creation is contradictory. It doesn't tell us about the nature and personality of God. One moment it says one thing, only in the next to deny it. There is in our world no adequate way to find God, and the searcher but wastes his time. God Himself is fully as conscious of this as we are. But He is in a position to do something about all this, because He is ALMIGHTY God.

The solution which God devised to show men once-and-for-all-time what kind of Diety He is was this: Once, and once only, God broke through history, broke through the design of things as He had established them, and revealed Himself in a most wonderful way. His personality, His spirit came to earth, was born in a man. The biography of this man is not of great consequence. He was born into a poor family, the first child of Mary and Joseph the carpenter, and lived in the village of Nazareth in Palestine. He was confirmed in the Jewish religion at the temple in Jerusalem when he was 12. At that time He quite amazed the priests and theologians by His remarkable grasp of knowledge and His insight into human problems. But, back in Nazareth, helping His father, life was quiet, and little more was heard of the boy named Jesus until, in His late 20's, He gathered around Himself 12 young men of varying backgrounds, who became the followers and disciples of the things that this Jesus taught. For three years they wandered throughout Palestine, and Jesus became known far and wide for His preaching, for His miracles of heal-

ing, and for His unique teachings. For He said that He was the Son of God.

Finally, the leaders of Judaism took exception to Jesus, because He wouldn't work within the framework of their ideas in the synagogues and temples, but instead moved among the poor, the lonely, the diseased, bringing His word of comfort, His presence, and, above all, the power of God's spirit which possessed His life. During the Jewish Passover season one year, Jesus and His followers went into Jerusalem where He was betrayed into the hands of His enemies. He received a mock trial, and was — of all things — condemned as guilty of subversive activity against the government. After the Roman custom of the time, He was crucified as a common public criminal. When He was dead, He was buried. But, three days later, His followers witnessed that He rose from the dead and walked with them again. This all the legions of Rome could never disprove, though they bent every effort to do so. In 40 days Jesus was gone, His spirit ascended and returned to its author, Almighty God. That is the life-story of Jesus of Nazareth, called by His followers, "the Christ," which means, "The One anointed by the Spirit and Presence of God."

Really, there is not very much that is especially distinguished or extraordinary about the 30 years that Jesus of Nazareth spent on earth some nineteen centuries ago. What is far more noteworthy is the effect that He had on those who came in contact with Him. There was something about Him and something about His teachings that could remake a man or a woman when he came to know Jesus Christ. And even more important, that something, that spirit of God, could be passed not only from Christ Himself to a person, but from that person to another, and so on throughout all time. The most convincing proof that Jesus Christ was what He said He was—the will and mind of God materialized in a human being—is the power and working force of His teachings and of His spirit. After the Ascension, Jesus left less than a hundred really devoted and consecrated followers. On the day of Pentecost, after they had a prayer meeting, they went out into the midst of the city, crowded with visitors from all lands come to celebrate the Jewish festival, and Peter, one of the twelve, stood up in the market-place and preached a sermon, and told about Jesus of Nazareth. And on that day, out of the throng, 3000 were converted and believed and Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

II

So great was the power of His spirit and the force of His teachings. But the early Christians were hated, opposed, and slaughtered everywhere throughout the Roman empire. And yet, less than 300 years after that day of Pentecost, when so many had been converted, despite the persecution and martyrdom of the Church, all Rome fell on its knees before Jesus Christ, and Christianity became the official and sole religion of the civilized world of that day. Such was the power of His spirit and the force of His teachings. Today, where once there were twelve on the dusty roads of Palestine, 800 million people everywhere in the world bow their heads and pray to God through Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. Proof sufficient that He is the Son of God?

What are they? What are those teachings which carry such force for life and reveal so clearly the power of the spirit of God? Here are some of the things about day-to-day living that God, the author of life, had to say about life, through Jesus Christ.

He said, "Don't worry about the mechanics of life, wondering what you're going to eat or drink or what you're going to wear. Surely life is more important than food and clothes. Your heavenly Father knows what you need. So, set your heart on His Kingdom and His goodness."

He said, "Treat other people exactly as you want to be treated by them."

He said, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world at the price of his own soul? What can a man offer to buy back His soul once he has lost it?"

He said, "Love your neighbor, your friend, other men as much as you love yourself."

He said, "Every man who promotes and pushes himself will be humbled. And every man who learns to be humble will be exalted before God."

He said, "A man who is faithful in the little things will be faithful in the big things too. And a man who cheats in the little things will cheat in the big things too."

He said, "I am the light of the world. The man who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will live his life in the light."

He said, "There are many resting places in My Father's House, and I am going there to prepare a place for you."

He said, "God loves the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him should not be lost, but should have eternal life."

And He said, "Heaven and earth may disappear, but my words shall never pass away!"

How great is the power of His spirit and the force of His teachings!

Following Jesus Christ is not easy. Yet the man who does, and gives himself 100 percent to doing what Christ said, finds marvelous strength, and help, and peace of mind, such as nothing in the world could ever give. For God has not eased the burdens, the temptations, or the pains of life in Jesus Christ, but instead He has shown us how to face up to them, how to have hope in the midst of defeat, how to have joy in the depth of sorrow, how to have strength and courage in the conflict and troubles of life, and, above all, how to share the same spirit that was Christ's.

How? By doing two things: First, by believing in Jesus Christ, and taking for granted **for yourself** His words of truth and by realizing that Christ is beside you, as He taught, anxious always to be your strength, your supporting friend, if only you'll open the door of your life to Him by following His will. And, second, that all Christ's help can be yours if you'll do this simple, moment-by-moment exercise: When you are faced — this afternoon, tomorrow morning — with the hectic decisions and annoyances of life at your house and where you work, say to yourself — if necessary fifty times a day: "I'm trying to be a Christian. What would Jesus Christ do if He were in my place at this moment? I know how He lived, and what He taught. I believe I know what He would do if He were me. May He give me strength at this moment to do the same." Jesus said, "Remember this: I am with you always — to the end of the world."

In this way I would explain Christianity to someone who never had heard of Christ.

WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE ATHEISTS

Rolland W. Schloerb, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois

A strange statement is made by Dr. Halford Luccock in one of his Lyman Beecher Lectures on preaching: "We need the cultivation of a stubborn atheism." This is a peculiar suggestion to make to a group who are interested in preaching the gospel of Christ. It is especially strange that this suggestion should be made at this time when atheism has become a fighting word in the world.

We often hear the word "atheist" applied to the Communists. From our view-point, it is always a disparaging word. When we speak of atheistic Communism we are pointing out that

there is something bad and undesirable about it. One reason that we object to Communism is that it is atheistic.

On the one hand, we abhor Communism because it is atheistic. On the other hand, we hear from this Christian preacher that "we need the cultivation of a stubborn atheism." This apparent inconsistency deserves a more careful examination.

I

When we think of the beliefs that people hold about God, there are several different words that are used. One person calls himself an agnostic. This does not mean that he disbelieves in God. He simply says that he does not know. He believes that neither the existence of God nor the nature of God can be known. So if he is asked whether he believes in God, he responds that he is agnostic — he does not know.

Another person calls himself a theist. This means that he believes in God. He does not necessarily feel that he knows everything about the nature of God. He acknowledges that there is much that he does not know —that the ways of God are not our ways and that the thoughts of God are not our thoughts. But he does believe that there is sufficient evidence for him to believe that there is power, usually personal, that has created and controls this universe. As a theist he believes in God.

Now what is an atheist? He is a theist with an "a" in front of him. But that "a" is very important. It means "not." The atheist is one who believes that there is no God. He believes that no God exists. This is the usual meaning of the word, and this is what we have referrence to when we refer to materialistic Communism as atheistic.

But obviously this is not what Luccock meant when he bade Christians to cultivate a stubborn atheism. He was not calling people to disbelieve in God. He was thinking of another kind of atheism.

In this sense an atheist may be defined as a person who does not believe in the God that others believe in. You may consider me an atheist if I do not believe in the God that you believe in. I may consider you an atheist if you do not believe in the God that I believe in.

Luccock bids us to recall the shouts that greeted the Christian martyrs in the Colosseum in the early centuries. The crowd shouted about these Christians: "To the lions with the atheists!" That was a time when Christians were atheists. This did not mean that they refused to believe in God. It meant that they did not serve the gods of the rulers of the Empire. They would not bow down to the gods of Rome and in that sense the Romans called them atheists.

II

A stubborn atheism is one that will not believe in and follow false gods. In that day it usually meant the refusal to follow the gods of the state —the refusal to bow down to Caesar.

Nationalism is still the god of many people. It is god in the sense that it claims the full loyalty and the ultimate devotion of individuals. Our true God is not necessarily the god we say we believe in — it is the god that we serve. It is what we honor as God.

The nation is in this sense the god of many people today as well as in that distant day. Such gods as people worshipped were really the lengthened shadow of the nation, inextricably bound to the tribe or nation itself. The result was that when a nation fell, the god died. He was heard of no longer. The god Ashur died with the city of Ninevah and the god Marduk died with the city of Babylon.

Professor Terrien of Union Theological Seminary adds to this observation: "There lies the hidden falsehood of the slogan which characterizes all religious nationalism, 'My country, right or wrong.'" The God of the Bible was not limited as the God of

one people alone. The nation could not be equated with Him. He was above the nation. Or to use Lincoln's phrase, the nation was "under God."

We live in a time of frantic and often fanatic nationalisms. They are trying to be god to people. Devotion to the nation is made the same as devotion to God. People will often be more disturbed by an insult against the nation or the flag than by an insult against God. The nation is the true God to them.

Patriotism, which is an appreciation and a devotion to our native land, is good. But when patriotism is made the ultimate object of our devotion, we are making God of what is something relative. The nation is under God, and whenever we are called upon to give the uncritical devotion to our country that we should give only to God, then a stubborn atheism is called for.

The best service we can render to our country is to remember that the nation is not God, lest we should make absolute something that should be relative in our loyalties.

III

Another false object of worship—present long ago and present now — is material possessions. Things can be god to people. Getting them, holding them, accumulating them can consume our time and energy and become the supreme object of life.

This can happen in a culture like ours where we have been especially successful in creating material wealth. Through applied science we have been fortunate in producing machines to do our work, and gadgets and appliances to add to our physical comfort. Our ultimate devotion can be given to the accumulation of things. Emerson may have had this in mind when he said: "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind."

As one who enjoys many of the conveniences made possible by our technological progress I would not want to say that they are not good. They are not good when they claim our ultimate devotion. They are not good when they seem the goal of life. They are not good gods. They are good servants, and if they can be kept in that place, then they make our devotion to the true God more intelligent and more effective.

Many people are exercised because of the disturbing influence of Russian Communism on our life. Toynbee thinks that this is hopeful for us, since Russia is troubling us enough that we must look to our foundations.

One observer made this remark: "Already there are signs that even if the Western world escapes the devouring jaws of communism, it may yet perish, as a spiritual entity, from the inner decay of complacent and successful materialism." We may find ourselves worshiping the wrong gods. This is a place where a stubborn atheism is needed.

Only God—the God of all nations and above all nations, the God who is spirit and who has shown himself truly in the Christ—only God should be God to us. To the false gods which claim our fealty we can only respond with stubborn atheism.

WORTH QUOTING — (Continued from Page 2)

of them put together. . . .

Apparently this is the great American genius; we can make more of a good — not necessarily the best — product than anyone else in the world, or possibly than any other combination of nations in the world.

James B. Kelley in **Commonweal**

When membership of a trade union, a trade association, a business society, demands conduct and action and practice which are not Christian, what is a Christian to do? It is very doubtful in a world of restricted practices, limitations of effort, the search for the maximum pay for the

minimum activity, a Christian doctrine of work can be carried out at all. Is trade to come first, or is Christ to come first? Are the demands of membership of the trade association to come first, or are the demands of membership of the church to come first? Are the principles of worldly business to come first, or are the principles of Christ to come first? The question in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18) is curiously modern. There are thousands of men and women today who are either facing or evading the very same choice as confronted the Christians of Thyatira 1800 years ago.

And the interesting thing about the situation at Thyatira is that the threat to the church did not come from outside the church. It was not the threat of persecution . . . It came from inside the church . . . with the most dangerous of all doctrines, a doctrine of compromise.

William Barclay

* * * *

The only worthwhile prize of victory is the power to forgive and to guide.

Winston Churchill

* * * *

What have you done as Christians to convert Communists to Christ? What have you done about Communism more than just hating it?

Charles T. Leber

* * * *

In the 17th century London was burned and many saw the catastrophe as a blessing in disguise. A greater London would be built on the ashes; but when actual building began so many people insisted that their houses be put exactly where they were before, that the new and greater city was never built. This bit of history is repeating itself. Customs and ideals which were unjust and wrong have been consumed in a world upheaval. Their burning has prepared ground for a better world. Do we plan to build the new world upon the old wrongs and old injustices? It was said by Stevenson of the "Master of Ballantrae" that he was afflicted with the "malady of not wanting." Is it the malady of not wanting that has got us? "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

John Gray Rhind

* * * *

Love of possessions is a distraction which makes love and obedience to God impossible.

Reinhold Neibuhr

* * * *

There was one humane spot in the dark cloud of cruelty that hung over the scene at Golgotha. It was the sponge. The sponge with its deadening drug would soothe the tortured nerves of the crucified. It was a token that there was a spark of compassion left in human breasts.

But Jesus would not take the sponge. He refused it, say two of the Gospel writers. He would match his courage against the tragedy of the hour. They had denied him justice in the judgment hall. Now they would be kind to him on the cross. He refused the kindness, for charity without justice is an insult.

But there was something else involved in his refusal. The sponge was given to him on a spearpoint: "So they put a sponge . . . on a spear." Back of their charity was the spearpoint of domination . . . no amount of good things offered on sponges . . . if offered on spearpoints can take away the prick of domination.

E. Stanley Jones

* * * *

How dangerous is drunken driving? One answer, from New York City's Police Commissioner Stephen P. Kennedy last week: According to alcohol-analysis tests supervised by chief medical examiner Milton Helpern, 55 percent of the motorists killed at the wheel in the city last year, or who died within 24 hours after accidents, were drunk.

Newsweek

A Communion Encyclopedia

THE TABLE OF THE LORD

Edited and compiled by
Charles L. Wallis

For a central and universally observed occasion in Christendom, there has heretofore been available only widely scattered and hard-to-get materials. This lack is now remedied by a superlative collection of Communion worship and preaching suggestions.

This treasury of resources includes:

8 complete services
40 Communion prayers
63 Communion poems
168 meditations on the meaning of the Supper
107 suggestions for hymns and special music
A wealth of additional materials, including Calls to Worship, Invocations, Benedictions, Scripture selections, Church Covenants, and Affirmations of Faith

While Mr. Wallis has kept the needs of the free, or evangelical, churches primarily in mind, he has drawn freely from all the principal branches of the Christian church and the centuries since the first Lord's Supper. There are 334 selections from more than 150 authors and sources under 37 major divisions. Five indexes make the book easily usable.

HARPER & BROTHERS, Publishers
49 EAST 33rd STREET NEW YORK 16, N.Y.